

THE PEN AND PENCIL CLUB.

A Word About the History of this Highly Interesting and Popular Organization—Told by our Reincarnated "Man-On-the-Corner."

The instantaneous popularity of the Pen and Pencil Club has caused much inquiry as to how it was organized and what spirit brought it into existence. Papers throughout the country are commenting upon the club and several communications have come to this office.

For several years, bright newspaper men have been coming to Washington from "all over." They wrote for their home sheets with more or less regularity, detailing with much fervor to their quondam constituents in the "provinces," the wonders of the capital city of the nation. The boys have gotten together informally at times, and agreed that there ought to be a organization that would bring men with a common purpose, a common ambition and a common usefulness more closely in touch. It was agreed from time to time that a center of action at some critical moment might serve the race well, and there might exist in union a potentiality that this generation little dreamed of. The studio of a congenial friend, the street corner, the literary and "other places" furnished the theater for meetings, and the "splendid thing" that Smith wrote last week for the *Colored American*, or the "brilliant thought" that Jones got off in the editorial "leader" of the *Bronzed Washingtonian*, together with a reading of the poetical effusion from Gloomey's latest muse, gave zest to the conversation that was not vitiated by the "dampening" influences which were sometimes in evidence.

On a rainy night—the night before George Washington's birthday—February 21, 1900, there was gathered in a modest room on the third floor of the Southern Hotel a trio of sympathetic spirits. They were T. Thomas Fortune, of the *New York Age*, his faithful Washington correspondent, W. T. Menard, L. M. Hershaw, the effervescent philosopher and raconteur, representing the *Atlanta Age*, and R. W. Thompson, associate editor of *The Colored American*. Fortune read some poetry that he intended should one day illuminate the literary heavens, Hershaw, Menard and Thompson planned out an ideal newspaper for the race and "on paper" drew the prospectus of a comprehensive international news service, with "plate matter" that would outshine "original stuff" as an arc light would outshine a tallow-dip. Stories were told, and adieus were about to be said, when Fortune, in his cheery, bantering way, exclaimed:

"Say, why don't you newspaper fellows take advantage of my next trip down to Washington and immortalize yourselves by giving a 'snack'—just a good old-fashioned Dutch luncheon—in honor of the most distinguished pencil pusher of the Afro-American fraternity? Brilliant idea, eh?"

"Just the thing," echoed the local pair. "It has always been a matter of regret to the fellows here that your comings and goings have not been announced in such fashion as to make the necessary arrangements in a town of busy men, whose engagements are as the sands of the sea."

A date was tentatively agreed upon, and a list of eligibles was commenced. The matter of organization was talk of and when the usual "tale of woe" about lack of cohesiveness was sprung, Fortune said impatiently:

"What's the matter with organizing a Pen and Pencil Club right now—right here?"

The idea was so novel and so suddenly flashed that Fortune kept the floor for another "speaking." Said he:

"We have all that we need for a temporary organization. Let us see how this would sound in the press: 'P. and P. Club organized—21st. Patrons Southern Hotel—who knows but what it is in earshot of the White House? Attendance large, intelligent and representative. Hershaw is large enough to fill the first bill, Menard is intelligent with in the meaning of the statute, and Thompson will pass in a crowd as representative. Officers elected, etc.—no meeting of Afro-Americans ever adjourns without electing officers. Let *The Colored American* and the two *Ages* tell the country next week all

these things that will have then come to pass."

Organization was agreed upon. Upon motion of Mr. Fortune, Hershaw was elected president, Thompson was chosen as secretary and Menard was given the office of treasurer. By general agreement, Fortune was elected chairman of executive committee, and after permanent organization, he was to retire and go upon the rolls as honorary member No. 1. The meeting then adjourned subject to the call of the president.

On Saturday *The Colored American* contained a column, telling of the harmonious and successful meeting, illustrated by handsome cuts of President Hershaw and Editor Fortune, honorary head of the executive committee.

Saturday evening, March 12, in the presence of distinguished company, Mr. Fortune was dined by the Pen and Pencil Club.

How long the club then languished in the vest pocket of its constitutional committee, that committee is best able to relate. Largely through the enterprise of Messrs. Hershaw, Menard and Paynter, supplemented by the moral support of all who had since joined, the club was snatched as a brand from the burning and went on to glorious achievements.

The throes of permanent organization were nerve trying, and the adoption of the constitution was attended by more "pints of order" than our forefathers at Philadelphia in 1776 ever had. The question of admission fees for charter and subsequent member of the House ways and means committee when a general tariff bill had to be disposed of. The result, however, was as satisfactory as human ingenuity could make it, and the club grew in strength.

Of the meteoric success of Pen and Pencil Club Day at the Second Baptist Lyceum, the best citizens of the town can testify. The public indorsement was pronounced and unmistakable. The organization discovered that it had not only a literary, but a "social standing" that could be capitalized at a premium. Then came the picnic—the banner outing of Washington home sear. Nothing had ever been seen at Lake View to equal the crowd that came—ample in number, gorgeous as to costume, creamy as to quality, and as congenial as a Georgia colored boy and a ripe watermelon. The Club realized that

"There's a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood
Leads on to fortune."

and the future of the organization has been made secure while the sun shines. The annual dinner in January will be a stellar event, and the "dignitaries" of the country are expected to take part.

The Pen and Pencil Club now numbers forty. An examination of the roster will give an idea of who they are and what they stand for. The officers are:

L. M. Hershaw, president; R. W. Thompson, 1st vice president; W. T. Menard, 2nd vice president; Roscoe C. M. Simmons, secretary; Robert Pelham Jr., cor. secretary; H. P. Slaughter, treasurer. Governing Board: Paul Laurence Dunbar, chairman; W. L. Houston, Samuel E. Lacy, Alex. L. Manly, Arthur S. Gray.

The 1st members who may one day rise to official distinction include:

H. Y. Arnett, T. W. Allen, Paul H. Bray, H. E. Baker, W. L. Board, J. C. Burrill, T. H. R. Clarke, J. C. Campbell, James A. Cobb, W. Bruce Evans, William T. Ferguson, John N. Goins, L. G. Gregory, E. R. Guther, Charles E. Hall, Thomas A. Johnson, M. Grant Lucas, Frank G. Manly, Thomas H. Malone, Daniel Murray, John H. Paynter, William L. Pollard, A. O. Stafford, J. W. F. Smith, E. M. Sims, Joseph H. Stewart, R. E. Toomey, John H. Wills, Lucien H. White.

The history of the Pen and Pencil Club, as told here, illustrates very happily that "mighty oaks may from little acorns grow."

THE MAN-ON-THE-CORNER.

The trip is worth 50 cents but we give it for 25. Indian Head, Notely Hall, Montgomery's orchestra and band—all for a little quarter!



The banquet given to Ill. James R. Spurgeon, 33 degrees, secretary to the American Legation at Monrovia, West Africa by the Jonathan Davis Consistory, A. A. S. Rate was the event of the past week. The most distinguished members of the craft were assembled on Friday last at Ill. H. C. Irvings Hall to do honor to the occasion. After the banquet the following toasts were responded to: Ills. R. L. Pendleton, commander in chief acting as toast master. The President of the United States, Ills. H. P. Crenshaw; the National Supreme Council and the Sovereign Grand Commander, Ill. James H. Hill, 33 degrees; the Council Deliberation, Ill. J. O. Bamfield, 33 degrees; Jonathan Davis Consistory; Ill. W. L. Pollard, 32 degrees; the Grand Lodge, F. A. A. M. D. C., Ill. Robert H. Terrell, 33 degrees; the Grand Master, F. A. A. M., D. C., Ill. Judson W. Lyons, 33 degrees; the Grand Chapter and other grand bodies, Ill. J. W. Freeman, 33 degrees; our Deceased Brethren, Ill. John F. N. Wilkinson, 33 degrees; Our Guest, Ill. James R. Spurgeon; Ill. S. Roger Watts, 33 degrees, Liberia; the President, Ill. G. W. Gibson, 33 degrees and our Masonic Brethren of every degree in the Black Republic over the sea, Ill. James R. Spurgeon, 33 degrees.

Brother L. G. Fletcher has returned to the city much benefited by his outing and ready and anxious for the contest with Prince Hall Lodge.

Brother H. J. Davis, Senior Warden of Eureka Lodge left on Saturday for a months vacation at Vineland, N. J. He carried his rituals and declared he would be ready for the contest on his return.

Sister Priscilla Irving of Queen Esther Lodge, like the Arab quietly folded her tent on last Sunday morning and in company with Brother John W. Hunter of Felix Lodge left for an outing at Bay Ridge.

Sir McKenzie Scott during the past week held his own and we sincerely hope that he may recover speedily. No man is more popular than this brother. His home has always had an open door for Masons and now while in the valley and shadow of death let us pray that he may be spared to family and friends.

A prominent Mason from South Washington sends in the following slate: For Grand Master, John T. Layton of Eureka; Deputy Grand Master, Richard H. Jones of Widows Son Lodge, Senior Grand Warden, Frank Hall of Felix Lodge, Junior Grand Warden, Jacob G. Hutchins of Prince Hall Lodge.

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There are formidable movements started these days in Washington where the old stages have to be introduced to the leaders.

NOTICE.

After the 17th of August—next Saturday—the special Masonic rate for subscribers will be discontinued, also also the special reduced rate for all city subscribers. You lose your opportunity if you fail to take advantage of this offer before August 17th.

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